

Message Text

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ACTION INR-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-14 ISO-00 SCCT-02 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00

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ORM-03 SR-02 AF-10 DRC-01 /092 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

TO AMCONSUL JERUSALEM IMMEDIATE NIACT

SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 7870

USINT DAMASCUS NIACT IMMEDIATE

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

USINT ALGIERS

USINT BAGHDAD

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

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JERUSALEM/AND DAMASCUS FOR SECRETARY'S PARTY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, XF

SUBJECT: MAALOT TRAGEDY AND FEDAYEEN LEADERSHIP

REF: STATE 101819

SUMMARY: LONG-TERM IMPLICATIONS OF MAALOT TRAGEDY ON FEDAYEEN
MOVEMENT AND ISRAELI-ARAB RELATIONS ARE EVEN MORE UPSETTING THAN
LOSS OF YOUNG LIVES AND ANGUISH OF ISRAELI NATION. IRRESPECTIVE OF
WHAT OTHERS MAY THINK OR SAY, MAALOT IS SEEN IN POSITIVE LIGHT
FROM TACTICAL VIEWPOINT BY MANNY ARABS AND LIKELY INSPIRE STILL
MORE ACTS OF VIOLENCE INSIDE ISRAELI-OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. AS

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FEARED FOLLOWING KIRYAT SHIMONA, MORE MODERATE FEDAYEEN ORGANIZATIONS

AND LEADERS SEEM TO BE PLACING INCREASED STRESS UPON VIOLENCE INSIDE OCCUPIED TERRITORIES (AND LESS ON EXTERNAL TERRORISM) EVEN WHILE CONTINUING EFFORTS PREPARE FOR EVENTUAL POSSIBILITY OF POLITICAL SOLUTION. THIS APPROACH MOST UNLIKELY TO BE OPPOSED BY MODERATE ARAB GOVTS. (EVEN THOSE WHO MOST FEAR IT SUCH AS LEBANESE), WHILE RADICAL GOVTS WILL CONTINUE WORKING WITH FEDAYEEN EXTREMISTS TO APPLY ADDITIONAL PRESSURE ON MORE MODERATE FEDAYEEN AND ARAB LEADERS. ISRAELI COUNTER-MEASURES, INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL, MAY TEMPORARILY SLOW DOWN PACE OF FEDAYEEN VIOLENCE. HOWEVER, WE SEE WELL-ESTABLISHED PALESTINIAN PATTERN OF VIOLENT ACTION-COUNTER-ACTION CONTINUING TO INCREASE OVER TIME, WITH ALL OF ITS UNSETTLING CONSEQUENCES FOR AREA, UNTIL AND UNLESS SYRIANS CAN SOMEHOW BE INDUCED JOIN EGYPT AND OTHER MODERATE ARAB GOVTS IN CONCERTED EFFORT BRING FEDAYEEN EXTREMISTS UNDER CONTROL AND SUPPORT "MODERATES" IN SHIFTING FROM VIOLENT TO POLITICAL ACTION. END SUMMARY.

1. TOP-LEVEL FEDAYEEN LEADERSHIP OF ALL MAJOR ORGANIZATIONS HAS BEEN MEETING HERE ALMOST CONTINUALLY SINCE MAY 8 TO TRY AND REACH AGREEMENT ON GENERAL APPROACH TO POLITICAL SOLUTION (E.G. ATTENDANCE OR NON-ATTENDANCE OF GENEVA IF OPPORTUNITY ARISES; ACCEPTANCE OR NOT OF RUMP PALESTINIAN ENTITY; RELATIONSHIP WITH JORDAN, ETC.). NO AGREEMENT REACHED AND NONE LIKELY BE REACHED AT THIS TIME ALTHOUGH SUB-COMMITTEE APPOINTED TO DRAFT SOME SORT OF PROPOSED "CONSENSUS". MEETINGS ORIGINATED WITH EXPECTATION THAT SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT IMMINENT AND THEREFORE PLO WOULD BE OBLIGED REACH DECISION ON BASIC ISSUES PREPARATORY TO HOLDING LONG-POSTPONED PALESTINE NATIONAL CONGRESS. 'ARAFAT'S COMMITMENT TO POLITICAL SETTLEMENT APPEARS STILL VERY MUCH ALIVE, ALTHOUGH IN ABSENCE SYRIAN DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT (AND SUPPORT OF SAIQA AND SARG) HE AND HIS SUPPORTERS NOT RPT NOT FORCING ISSUE WITH PFLP, PFLP/GC, ALF AND OTHER EXTREMISTS PARTICIPATING IN MEETING. PNC LIKELY BE POSTPONED AGAIN.

2. EVENTS OF MAY 15 IN ISRAEL MEAN TO US THAT AT SAME TIME POLITICAL OPTION BEING CONSIDERED BY FEDAYEEN ORGANIZATIONS, CERTAIN ELEMENTS ALSO PREPARING FOR STEPPED-UP VIOLENT ACTION INSIDE ISRAEL AND OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. THIS IS IN KEEPING WITH OFT-STATE POSITION OF PLO WHICH HAS CONDEMNED FIRING ACROSS BORDER AND INTERNATIONAL TERRORISM BUT HAVE ALWAYS SUPPORTED IDEA OF ACTION INSIDE ISRAELI-SECRET

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CONTROLLED TERRITORY. MOREOVER, AS FORECAST IN BEIRUT 4426 OF APRIL 16 AND OTHER TELS FROM HERE, TEL AVIV AND OTHER POSTS IN AREA, "SUCCESSFUL" KIRYAT SHEMONA OPERATION HAS EVIDENTLY CAUSED PDLFP AND PERHAPS EVEN SOME FATAH ELEMENTS "FEEL OBLIGED ENGAGE IN TERRORIST OR CROSS-BORDER OPERATIONS IN ORDER REASSERT THEIR AUTHORITY OVER RANK-AND-FILE AND AVOID BEING OUTBID BY DIEHARDS." AT PRESENT STAGE OF MANEUVERING OVER FUTURE OF PALESTINIAN PEOPLE, SOME SORT OF OPERATIONS INSIDE ISRAEL

APPEAR AS ALMOST INDISPENSABLE MINIMUM FOR MORE MODERATE FEDAYEEN ORGANIZATIONS AND LEADERS IN ORDER NOT LOSE OUT TO EXTREMISTS. THEY ALSO SEEM TO IMPRESS FEDAYEEN AS BEING A PALESTINIAN VARIATION OF NORTH VIETNAMESE MOTTO OF "TALK AND FIGHT", A SORT OF FIGHTING IN ORDER FORCE PLACE FOR PALESTINIANS IN TALK.

3. MAALOT OPERATION WILL, WE FEAR, EXERCISE STILL GREATER STIMULUS ON FEDAYEEN AND THEIR SYMPATHIZERS, INSIDE ISRAELI-OCCUPIED TERRITORIES AND IN ARAB COUNTRIES, TO STEP UP VIOLENT ACTION INSIDE ISRAEL. DESPITE LOSS OF LIFE, ACTION OF PDFLP AT MAALOT BEING HAILED HERE FROM TACTICAL POINT OF VIEW BY MANY SHADES OPINION AND PRESS ALTHOUGH NOT NECESSARILY APPROVING ACT ITSELF. (GOI EXPLANATION OF DECISION ATTACK SCHOOL HAS FEW BELIEVERS, GIVEN PAST ISRAELI RECORD OF EMPLOYING RUSE VS. FEDAYEEN.) THIS SORT OF ACTION SEEMS LESS UPSETTING TO MOST ARAB GOVTS AND MORE APPEALING TO ARAB OPINION THAN FIRING ACROSS BORDER, HIJACKING, ATTACKING FOREIGN EMBASSIES, ETC. MAALOT SEEN HERE AS STRICTLY INTERNAL OPERATION, CARRIED OUT BY PALESTINIANS INDIGENOUS TO OCCUPIED TERRITORIES. (BEIRUT 5553)
RASH OF OTHER FEDAYEEN INCIDENTS INSIDE ISRAEL ON MAY 15 SEEN AS CONFIRMATION OF THIS THESIS.

4. ISRAELI RETALIATION AGAINST LEBANON IS NOT, AS WE HAVE REPORTED IN BEIRUT 4520 OF APRIL 17, LIKELY HAVE ANY EFFECT ON GOL ABILITY STOP ACTIONS VS. ISRAEL. GOL DOES NOT HAVE EITHER MILITARY OR POLITICAL CAPABILITY TO PREVENT ANY AND ALL FEDAYEEN FROM GETTING NEAR ENOUGH BORDER TO SLIP ACROSS. NOR IS BOMBING OF REFUGEES CAMPS LIKELY DETER FEDAYEEN. AS SEEN FROM HERE THERE APPEARS BE INCREASING NUMBER OF PALESTINIANS, FEDAYEEN OR NOT, INSIDE ISRAELI-OCCUPIED TERRITORY WHO ARE PREPARED RUN RISKS FOR PALESTINIAN "CAUSE". THIS IS APPARENTLY RESULT OF OCTOBER WAR WHICH, TOGETHER WITH GREATER ACCEPTANCE OF PLO SEEMS TO HAVE CHANGED DRASTICALLY ARAB AND PALESTINIAN ATTITUDES TOWARD ISRAEL
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AND TOWARD PALESTINIAN "CAUSE", INCLUDING PALESTINIANS LIVING IN OCCUPIED TERRITORIES.

5. KEY LEBANESE OFFICIALS TO WHOM WE HAVE SPOKEN ABOUT THIS PROBLEM OVER PAST FEW DAYS, BEFORE AND AFTER MAALOT, HAVE ALL BEEN CATEGORIC IN STATING THAT SYRIAN-ISRAELI DISENGAGEMENT AGREEMENT FOLLOWED BY SOME GESTURE TOWARD PALESTINIANS COULD CREATE NEW SET OF FACTS WHICH WOULD MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR GOL TO TRY AND REACH AGREEMENT WITH SARG AND 'ARAFAT ON ACTION PROGRAM DESIGNED CURB EXTREMIST FEDAYEEN ELEMENTS BY FORCE IF NECESSARY, AND CHANNEL ACTION BY MORE MODERATE FEDAYEEN INTO PREPARATIONS FOR POLITICAL DISCUSSIONS RATHER THAN VIOLENT ACTION. THIS BASED ON CONTACTS WITH SARG AND FEDAYEEN. GOL OFFICIALS ARE NOT CERTAIN THIS WOULD BE SUCCESSFUL BUT DO BELIEVE IT IS ONLY RPT ONLY WAY COME TO GRIPS WITH ROOT PROBLEM OF PALESTINIAN

VIOLENCE.
GODLEY

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